

Title: Strength, Covenant, and the Call to Active Faith

Sermon Summary: This sermon draws from 2 Chronicles 22-23 to examine the reigns of Ahaziah and the subsequent coup led by the priest Jehoiada, using these historical accounts to challenge believers toward active, courageous faith rather than passive complacency. The pastor weaves together themes of godly versus ungodly influence, the danger of toxic empathy, the responsibility of believers to speak truth in love, and the call to use whatever sphere of influence one possesses for the glory of God. Using the contrast between wicked maternal influence and the courageous intervention of Jehoiada and his wife Jehoshibah, the sermon urges the congregation to recognize that passive neutrality in the face of evil is itself a form of complicity. The sermon also celebrates the testimony of a church member, Mark, who received a lung transplant and is actively witnessing to medical staff during his recovery, serving as a living example of using every circumstance as an opportunity for the gospel.

Key Points:

- Godly or ungodly parental and communal influence shapes the direction of a life, and believers will be held accountable for how they influenced those around them
- Toxic empathy, the tendency to accept and celebrate sin in the name of compassion, is a spiritual danger that leads people away from truth and ultimately toward destruction
- Truth and grace are not opposites; Jesus modeled holding both simultaneously, as seen in his encounter with the woman at the well
- Passive neutrality in the face of evil is not a safe or neutral position but is itself a form of encouraging wrongdoing
- Jehoiada demonstrated that strength is not physical force but the conviction to act on what is right when it would be easier and safer to remain silent
- Believers are a priesthood called to spiritual warfare, and that calling requires courage, prayer, and intentional engagement with the culture around them
- The Lord's Supper is an opportunity to renew one's covenant with God and

recommit to kingdom purposes over personal comfort

- Civic engagement, including prayer over and participation in elections, is part of a believer's responsibility to steward the influence God has given

Scripture Reference:

- 2 Chronicles 22 and 23, covering the reign and death of Ahaziah, the murderous takeover by Athaliah, the hiding of the young king Joash, and Jehoiada's covenant to restore rightful rule
- 2 Corinthians 12, referenced in the opening prayer, where Paul declares that God's grace is sufficient and that divine strength is made perfect in human weakness
- Romans 13, referenced regarding God-ordained authority and the role of governing powers in restraining evil

Stories:

- The ongoing testimony of Mark, a church member who received a double lung transplant at Mayo Clinic after his previous medication became ineffective, who is actively sharing his faith with ICU staff during recovery, including one staff member who returned after his shift to continue a spiritual conversation
- The biblical account of Ahaziah's one-year reign, his association with the wicked house of Ahab, and his death at the hands of Jehu, who had been appointed by God to execute judgment on that household
- The account of Athaliah seizing power and attempting to destroy the entire royal line, and Jehoshibah hiding the infant Joash in the temple for six years to preserve the Davidic line
- Jehoiada the priest organizing commanders, Levites, and heads of families to place Joash on the throne and restore the covenant between God and the nation
- The woman at the well, cited as an example of Jesus speaking truth directly and lovingly without avoiding the reality of her sin, resulting in her transformation rather than her rejection of him
- A personal reflection from the pastor on his own upbringing, crediting his parents for loving him enough to discipline and correct him, and connecting that to the biblical principle that discipline drives out the foolishness bound up in a child's heart